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May 2d, 1854.

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

A letter was read from the Portland (Maine) Society of Nat. History, dated April 20th, 1854, acknowledging the receipt of an entire copy of the Publications of the Academy, presented in accordance with a late resolution.

Also a letter from the American Philosophical Society, dated April 27, 1854, acknowledging the receipt of the last number of the Journal and of the Proceedings.

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May 9th.

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

Dr Le Conte presented a paper for publication in the Proceedings, entitled "Synopsis of the Cucuicides of the United States," which was referred to Mr. Cassin, Dr. Zantzinger, and Dr. Rand.

Dr. Le Conte exhibited a fragment of the jaw of a new Pachyderm from the Tertiary of Virginia, 80 or 90 miles S. W. of Alexandria, and characterised it as a new genus allied to Dicotyles.

Mr. Wm. Parker Foulke asked the attention of the Academy to a Lecture by Mr. Hugh Miller, recently republished in the United States, under the title, "The Two Records, the Mosaic and the Geological;" and made some remarks upon the importance of maintaining a careful scrutiny of the logic of the natural sciences. The cultivators of those sciences are particularly interested at this time in preventing any misapprehension of the results of their researches, as there is a prevailing disposition to "reconcile" these by extreme processes with the popular interpretation of certain texts of the Mosaic history. Unfinished investigations of the students of nature are used as complete evidence; and provisional generalizations are employed as fixed premises, from which are drawn conclusions very inconvenient to subsequent inquirers and writers. Thus both religion and natural science are wronged.

Mr. Miller teaches that in the attempt to reconcile the two "records," there are only three periods to be accounted for by the geologist, viz., "the period of plants, the period of great sea monsters and creeping things: and the period of cattle and beasts of the field;" that the first of these "periods" is represented by the rocks grouped under the term *palæozoic*, and is distinguished from the *secondary* and the *tertiary*, chiefly by its "gorgeous flora;" and that "the geological evidence is so complete as to be patent to all, that the first great period of organized being was, as described in the Mosaic record, peculiarly a period of herbs and trees yielding seed after their kind." The general reader, not familiar with the details of geological arrangement, could not fail to infer from such a statement, used for such a purpose, that the *palæozoic* rocks are regarded by geologists as forming one group, representative of one period which can properly be said to be distinguished as a whole by its gorgeous flora; and that it is properly so distinguished for the argument in question. It was familiar to the Academy as well as to Mr. Miller, that from the carboniferous rocks downward (backward in order of time) there have been discriminated a large number of periods differing one from another in mineral and in organic remains; and that the proportion of the carboniferous era to the whole series is small, whether we regard the thickness of its deposits or its conjectural chronology. It is only of this carboniferous era, the latest of this series, that the author's remarks could be true; and even of this, if taken for the entire surface of the earth, it could not be truly asserted that

"the evidence is so complete as to be patent to all" that the quantity of its vegetable products distinguishes it from the earth's surface during the era in which we live. To confound by implication all the periods termed palæozoic, so as to apply to them as a whole what could be true, if at all, only of the carboniferous period, is a fallacious use of a generalization made for a purpose and upon a principle not properly available for the writer's argument. The high esteem in which the character of Mr. Miller is deservedly held by readers in the United States, where his writings are widely circulated, and the respectful manner in which his interesting researches have occasioned his name to be mentioned by authors eminent in the department of geology, give to such of his writings as bear upon the biblical question, peculiar importance with reference to the community at large.

Mr. F. urged the duty of insisting upon the maintenance of regular methods of exposition as well as of investigation, leaving apparent inconsistencies, which are beyond our means of explanation, to be "reconciled" by our successors with the aid of larger accumulations of knowledge than we possess. The progress of science has been retarded by the assumption that every discovery must be immediately proved to be harmonious with certain other portions of our knowledge. A due regard to the sacredness of religious faith and to the natural sensitiveness of the popular mind will secure respectful caution; but it is most consistent with the acknowledged imperfection of human faculties, and at the same time most worthy of the true dignity of science, to assume that ultimately all truths will be found to agree; and meantime, strictly adhering to the canons of evidence, to explore courageously the great field open to us. We ought especially to avoid generalizations which have no sound philosophical principle, or which are framed or applied merely from a desire to appease over-zealous minds ignorant of the facts already ascertained. This obligation is stronger in proportion to the degree of confidence given to the teacher in any case, and also in proportion to the limitation of access to other sources of information.

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*May 16th.*

Vice-President BRIDGES in the Chair.

Letters were read—

From the Imperial Soc. of Naturalists of Moscow, dated May 30th, June 1st, and September 13th, 1853;

From the Kaiserlichen Akad. der Wissenschaften, dated Vienna, 10th Nov., 1853;

From the Royal Academy of Sciences of Stockholm, dated 23d Nov., 1853;

From the K. K. Geologischen Reichenstalt, dated Vienna, 22d Nov., 1853, severally transmitting their publications announced this evening by the Librarian.

From the Royal Acad. of Sciences of Stockholm, dated Nov. 1, 1853;

From the K. K. Geologischen Reichenstalt, dated Vienna, 21st Nov., 1853;

From the Smithsonian Institution, dated Washington, May 10th, 1854; and

From the Portland Society of Nat. History, dated Portland, Maine, 11th May, 1854, severally acknowledging the receipt of the Publications of the Academy.

Dr. Le Conte presented a paper for publication in the Proceedings, entitled "Notes on some new Coleopterous Insects from the Collections